

# Dead cop hailed 50 years later

By WEDA DECK, 21 Dec 1994  
STAFF WRITER



## ALAMEDA POLICEMAN FILES APPEAL

Officer Accused of Molesting Woman, Threatening Gresham Makes Protest

EUGENE VAN HOUTTE, 31, a critical day from relatives received when his motorcycle collided with an automobile while he was on his way to work.

Several hours after the accident, 41-year-old DeWard Gresham, Jr., recovered consciousness, but not said he suffered a head injury and possible internal injuries. Attendants police reported that Gresham's motorcycle had collided with an automobile driven by Thomas H. Rudd, 36-year-old Rudd's carpenter, of 2236 Pacific Avenue, his widow, Helen, and two children, DeWard B. Gresham, 33, and John Lee Gresham, seven weeks.

Gresham died Saturday at Alameda Hospital. His motorcycle crashed into a car driven by Thomas H. Rudd, 30, a carpenter, Friday morning at Buena Vista Avenue and Union Street. Fellow officers said he was chasing a speeder car at the time. Rudd was not held.

The service was held at the Fowler-Anderson Chapel, 2244 Santa Clara Avenue. The Rev. Asa L. D. Faupel, leader of the Humanist Fellowship, officiated.

## IDENTICAL DEATHS TAKE MOTORCYCLIST, ARRESTING OFFICER

ALAMEDA, Dec. 16.—In the Alameda police court called yesterday afternoon, Thomas H. Silverthorn, 31, a patrolman, was arrested and accused to No one any sex and according to routine procedure, a card was written to be sent to the home address of young Silverthorn, 1005 Santa Clara Avenue.

Checking the records, Clerk F. E. McNamara found that Silverthorn had died early yesterday morning from injuries received Monday in a motorcycle accident. Checking, the name of the patrolman who had issued young Silverthorn a citation for speeding on July 2, in order to cancel the citation, McNamara found the name of DeWard Gresham.

Gresham had hurried him into his motorcycle and had him into the state of an automobile, in exactly the same type of accident which resulted in the death of young Silverthorn.

Police motorcycle patrolman, Manning, on Gresham's funeral, Monday, happened on the scene of the accident at Webster Street and Atlantic Avenue, in which Silverthorn was fatally injured.

DECEMBER 21, 1994

ALAMEDA.—Half a century after Alameda Police officer DeWard Burton Gresham was killed in an accident while en route to work, he was awarded a Medal of Valor and the Rob Davy Award.

DeWard B. Gresham Jr., accepted both items Tuesday on behalf of his father in a small ceremony at the Police Department. The department also presented the officer's son with memorabilia depicting his father's formal swearing in and letter of appointment.

Gresham said he was 7 when his father died, but his dad's influence stayed with him over the years.

"He loved automobiles, airplanes and the Navy Air Station. These things left a lasting effect on me."

Gresham said his father was a great big guy who was good and impeccably honest.

DeWard Gresham Jr., the son of DeWard Burton Gresham Sr., accepts the Rob Davy Award and the Medal of Valor from police Chief Burny Matthews.

Chief Burny Matthews.

About 11 APD staff members joined Matthews at the ceremony.

Gresham's son was moved by the recognition, he said.

"I got a bit teary-eyed last week when I got the call," said Gresham, an Oakland resident. "He was only 32 at the time and my mother never remarried."

"It is very important that we remember our own," Chief Burny Matthews said while making the presentation. "Whether it is 40, 50 or 60 years ago, we should honor what they sacrificed for our city and the profession."

Gresham served on the force from Nov. 15, 1938 to July 10, 1942, Matthews said.

"The facts of the case," Matthews said, "are that at the intersection of Buena Vista and Union, a car pulled out and they collided. DeWard died at the Alameda Hospital

on charges of misconduct, growing out of a complaint of DeWard Gresham, son of Dr. John L. Gresham, a young Gresham struck him with a pistol and threatened to shoot him when he went to aid a young woman he saw. Gresham was immediately hospitalized and came to the Civil Service Board at his insistence Tuesday night. It has been referred to City Attorney Stanley Wood.

A Civil Service Board rule says a person under charges must appear in person to answer. Van Houtte was unable to do so and did not receive written notice.

The policeman, who was ordered to serve the notice, Van Houtte asserted, sent the paper in his pocket several days before serving it.

## Motorcycle Officer Seriously Hurt

ALAMEDA, July 10.—An Alameda police officer was seriously injured yesterday when his motorcycle collided with an automobile while he was on his way to work.

Officer DeWard B. Gresham, 33, a patrolman, was driving his motorcycle when he was chasing a speeder, within he was on his way to work.

Officer Gresham, the son of Dr. John L. Gresham, a member of the police force since November, 1958. His home was at 41 Lincoln Avenue. His wife, Helen, and two children, DeWard B. Gresham, Jr., 33, and John Lee Gresham, seven weeks.

Officer Gresham was driving his motorcycle when he was chasing a speeder, within he was on his way to work.

Officer Gresham, the son of Dr. John L. Gresham, a member of the police force since November, 1958. His home was at 41 Lincoln Avenue. His wife, Helen, and two children, DeWard B. Gresham, Jr., 33, and John Lee Gresham, seven weeks.

Officer Gresham was driving his motorcycle when he was chasing a speeder, within he was on his way to work.

Officer Gresham, the son of Dr. John L. Gresham, a member of the police force since November, 1958. His home was at 41 Lincoln Avenue. His wife, Helen, and two children, DeWard B. Gresham, Jr., 33, and John Lee Gresham, seven weeks.

Officer Gresham, the son of Dr. John L. Gresham, a member of the police force since November, 1958. His home was at 41 Lincoln Avenue. His wife, Helen, and two children, DeWard B. Gresham, Jr., 33, and John Lee Gresham, seven weeks.

Officer Gresham, the son of Dr. John L. Gresham, a member of the police force since November, 1958. His home was at 41 Lincoln Avenue. His wife, Helen, and two children, DeWard B. Gresham, Jr., 33, and John Lee Gresham, seven weeks.

## Officer, Chasing Speeder, Hits Car; Badly Injured

ALAMEDA, March 2.—Patrolman DeWard B. Gresham, 31, was injured seriously yesterday when he crashed his motorcycle into an automobile while chasing a speeder at 50 miles an hour.

The officer suffered a fractured ankle, cuts and bruises, and was

badly shaken up. He was held at Alameda Hospital for observation.

The accident happened as he chased a speeding motorist out Webster Street. He did not see Lloyd D. Case, 41, 1621 Wood Street, another driver, turning at Eagle Avenue.

The motorcycle struck the car broadside and was demolished. Gresham was thrown to the pavement beneath his crumpled vehicle. The speeder escaped.

## DUSTED OFFICER GETS HEARING

ALAMEDA, Mar. 29, 1932

Patrolman Eugene Van Houtte's pistol was unloaded when it was pointed at DeWard Gresham during the altercation which caused Van Houtte's dismissal from the police force, according to his testimony at the hearing of his appeal before the Civil Service Board last night.

Van Houtte testified that he unloaded his pistol before the drinking began "so that nobody could be hurt." The Civil Service Board took testimony from Van Houtte and others, and then ordered the case continued until April 7 for more testimony.

Van Houtte was dismissed from the police force after it was alleged that he had annoyed a restaurant waitress and had assaulted Gresham, son of Councilman John L. Gresham, after the latter had tried to protect the waitress. Testimony at last night's hearing declared that there was an informal party at the restaurant service station where the conflict occurred, and that four persons imbibed three quarts of gin and had sent out for more.

Witnesses included City Manager Ossian E. Carr, Chief of Police James T. Drew, DeWard Gresham, William Fournier, and Mrs. Henriette Anderson, the waitress. The witnesses were all for the prosecution. Van Houtte's witnesses will testify at the next session.

The Civil Service Board heard Van Houtte's appeal because it was compelled to do so under a writ of mandamus from the Superior Cour-